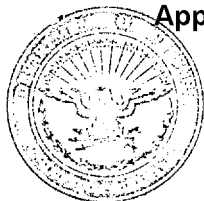


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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

C O P Y

17 November 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS) ATTENTION: COL MOORE.

SUBJECT: Enemy Strengths and Logistical Requirements in SVN (U)

1. (S/NFD) This is in reply to your requests of 4 and 8 November 1965, that an estimate be made to determine the size, composition, and logistical requirements of enemy forces remaining in South Vietnam if the following were withdrawn:

a. All NVA Regulars.

b. All North Vietnamese infiltrators who have been integrated into Main Force VC units.

c. All South Vietnamese who have gone to North Vietnam for training then returned to South Vietnam and integrated into NVA units and Main Force VC units.

d. All South Vietnamese who have gone to North Vietnam for training and returned to South Vietnam and integrated in non-military roles in the VC infrastructure and NLF.

2. (C) The total current strength of VC/NVA forces in SVN is reported by MACV as follows (figures include the strengths of confirmed/probable and possible units):

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| VC Combat Personnel in units: | 62,955 |
| NVA Combat Personnel in units: | 45,630 |
| VC Irregulars: | 100 - 120,000 |
| Admin Support: | 18 - 19,000 |
| Political/Military Cadre: | <u>40,000</u> |
| TOTAL | 265,335 - 287,585 |

DIA review(s) completed.

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3. (C) Since 1959, over 118,000 infiltrators are accepted as having entered SVN. This figure is considered conservative. Prior to mid-1964 the vast majority of infiltrators are considered to have been former Viet Minh or returnees. How many of these returnees remain in VC regular or irregular units is not known but it is logical to assume that many of them hold positions of leadership. Others have been killed, rendered medically unfit, discharged because of age or are serving the Viet Cong in Admin Support or Political/Military Cadre rolls. A few may have gone back to NVN and some have defected and deserted. Losses among the ranks of the returnees have taken place due to a variety of reasons not necessarily directly a result of the fighting. These losses as well as combat losses cannot be established with any degree of confidence. Thus no reliable figures for the number of returnees now in SVN can be determined.

4. (S/NFD) Since we have no reliable fix on the number of Viet Cong returnees to South Vietnam and since no evidence exists to indicate how many of them are still present in the Viet Cong organization, estimates of these personnel strengths are based on an analytical judgement and can only be regarded as approximations. It appears logical, however, that from 20 to 30 per cent of VC in Main Force units are returnees. It is also felt that some 80-85 per cent of the Political/Military and perhaps 60-65 per cent of the Admin Support troops are hard core Viet Cong or North Vietnamese who, under the criteria, of this paper, would be candidates for withdrawal. It is likely, however, that the Communists would find a way to disperse many, if not most, of these troops within the remaining Viet Cong Main Force units and irregular forces or among the population to permit them to continue the insurgency.

5. (S) The number of NVA personnel who have infiltrated into SVN as cadre and filler/replacements for VC or NVA units is not known. These people initially provided some of the leadership and key personnel for the VC organization. Since 1964, when the number of NVA initially became more plentiful, they have provided fillers and replacements for both VC and NVA units, probably filling the ranks of VC units in the northern provinces of SVN where manpower is scarce to a greater extent than in the south. Conversely, VC recruits have helped fill the ranks of NVA units and there has been a great deal of such integration in Communist units operating in the northern provinces. If all NVA troops were withdrawn, the ranks of VC units in the northern provinces would diminish somewhat, but to what extent cannot be judged and the effect would vary with the unit involved. Undoubtedly the combat effectiveness of each VC unit involved would diminish for a period, but if a return to small unit actions were to take place along with a decentralization of the VC command and control system, the need for NVA fillers might also diminish. It is conservatively estimated that some 10-15 per cent of VC unit strengths are NVA infiltrators, most of whom are replacements in VC units in the I and II Corps areas.

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6. (S/NFD) MACV presently holds VC irregular strength at between 100,000 and 120,000 personnel. This figure is considered by MACV as conservative and studies are underway which may raise the total to 200,000 or more. Current CIA studies indicate that Communist irregular strength in South Vietnam might be from 250,000 to 300,000. Undoubtedly, some of the leadership of the irregular force is provided by the returnees who literally came back to their homes in the south when they infiltrated. How many of the returnees are in the irregular forces is not known, but among the active leadership, they are conservatively estimated at 10-15 per cent. Many of these have families settled within guerrilla areas. The Communists would almost certainly leave behind the majority of guerrilla leaders who are returnees to pursue the war as insurgents. For the purpose of this paper, however, this group will be considered as candidates for withdrawal.

7. (S/NFD) If the assumptions in previous paragraphs are applied to present strength figures the following would result:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| a. Returnees presently serving in VC combat units (62,955 x 20% - 30%) | - 12,591 - 18,887 |
| b. Returnees and NVA serving as Admin Support Personnel (18,500 x 60% - 65%) | - 11,000 - 12,025 |
| c. Returnees and NVA serving as Political/Military Cadre (40,000 x 80% - 85%) | - 32,000 - 34,000 |
| d. Returnees serving in VC irregular forces (110,000 x 10% - 15%) | - 11,000 - 16,500 |
| e. NVA infiltrators serving in VC units (62,955 x 10% - 15%) | - <u>6,296</u> - <u>9,440</u> |
| Total returnees and NVA to be withdrawn | 72,887 - 90,852 |
| Total in NVA units to be withdrawn | <u>45,630</u> - <u>45,630</u> |
| Total to be withdrawn | 118,517 136,482 |

8. (S/NFD) The total number of enemy personnel remaining in SVN under the conditions expressed in paragraph 1 is estimated at between 147,000 and 170,000, including irregulars. This number would probably be further reduced by surrenders and desertions related to the withdrawal. The ratio of RVN troops to VC would be approximately 4.5 to 1, a situation which would still tend to favor the guerrilla tactics of the Viet Cong. Thus, the VC forces could be expected to place more emphasis on small unit actions which would chip away at government forces and terrorize the people under government control.

9. (S) The logistic requirements of the VC under the conditions described would be considerably reduced. It is estimated that, at roughly present levels of combat, approximately 6 to 9 STPD would be required from outside sources to sustain remaining VC Main Force Units (probably some 40,000 to 45,000 personnel).

10. (S) MACV estimates that Viet Cong recruitment in SVN numbers some 3,500 per month. It is generally agreed by the Intelligence Community that the VC have been capable of recruiting or conscripting enough men to replace their losses and add steadily to their strength. It is also agreed that the VC/NVA have the current capability of recruiting and training from 7,000 to 10,000 men a month in South Vietnam. There is, however, no information available which accurately assesses the number of men recruited and undoubtedly this figure has changed considerably through the years. As the need for replacements is increased, the VC capability to provide them will probably be severely taxed and infiltration will either have to increase or the VC will have to scale down their military effort.

SIGNED

BURTON R. BROWN
Brigadier General, USA
Deputy Assistant Director for
Intelligence Production